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CPYRGHT 'Orchestra of Subversion'

Allen Dulles, the former CIA boss, did a marvelous job of summarizing the drifts and trends of the Cold War in a talk in West Hartford the other night. At the same time, he provided his audience with a sense of direction that is understood by too few people.

A Communist "orchestra of subversion" was Mr. Dulles' target in the second annual William Ainsworth Greene memorial lecture, sponsored by the Greater Hartford Foreign Policy Association. "We are faced with a secret war of subversion for which we are unprepared," Dulles warned.

The Communists, he said, are particularly well-prepared for such a war, and are waging it vigorously and openly — despite their internal differences. They have the weapons to wage such a war: Communist party organizations in 70 countries; international trade unions; front organizations; their press and training centers and security service.

As long as we have the military capacity to cope with the Communists, Dulles said, there is little likelihood of an outright war. The more imminent danger, he feels, is how the Reds succeed in

preying on the people of the world, subverting their governments, bringing them to heel as surely and inevitably as weapons could do.

The challenge is an enormous one, and Mr. Dulles' proposals as to how to cope with the threat make good sense. First and foremost, he believes, the American people must be taught "the nature of the dangers we face," honestly and objectively.

Beyond that, Mr. Dulles suggests that our own interests would best be served by promoting "social, economic and cultural" evolution behind the Iron Curtain, thereby creating great internal pressures on the Red rulers.

We find, too often, that people continue to think of the Western-Communist confrontation as an issue of arms, of nuclear capability, of peace through strength. If we are to accept Mr. Dulles' thesis, we would do well to think of that contest as a competition to thwart subversion. In that light, Cuba ceases to be merely an annoyance, as Mr. Dulles said, and becomes a center of deadly subversion, designed to ruin Hemispheric solidarity. That threat is real enough.